

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

(original) 1. A competitive, availability prediction system for predicting relative, competitive availability of seating on an airline flight comprises:
an availability predictor that predicts seating availability on a competitive flight;
an availability system that produces an actual availability response for a flight; and
decision logic that compares the predicted answer from the availability predictor and the potential answer from the availability system to establish a decision with respect to actual availability.

(original) 2. The system of claim 1 wherein the decision of the decision logic is a bias that determines whether the potential answer should be modified based upon the relative competitive position of the competitor represented by the availability predictor.

(original) 3. The system of claim 1 further comprising:
modifying logic that is responsive to the availability response from the availability system and from the bias from the decision logic to modify the actual availability answer in accordance with the bias.

(original) 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the decision logic determines whether the prediction from the availability predictor indicates that a competitor is in a more favorable or less favorable competitive position than the answer produced by the availability system.

(Currently Amended) 5. The system of claim 1 wherein ~~the~~ a decision as to an actual availability answer is based on the decision ~~message~~ from the decision logic.

(Currently Amended) 6. The system of claim 1 wherein the decision ~~message~~ from the decision logic can have a plurality of states.

(original) 7. The system of claim 6 wherein one of the states include a neutral state that is does not tend to modify the potential answer received from the availability system.

(original) 8. The system of claim 6 wherein one of states biases a potential answer towards answering that a seat is available.

(original) 9. The system of claim 6 wherein one of states biases a potential answer towards answering that a seat is not available.

(original) 10. The system of claim 6 wherein state depends upon the relative competitive position of the competitor represented by the availability predictor.

(Currently Amended) 11. The system of claim 3 wherein the decision logic determines whether the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those ~~which~~ that the availability system indicates the user of the system can offer.

(original) 12. The system of claim 11 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are not at a lower price, then the system can return a bias towards making the seat unavailable.

(original) 13. The system of claim 12 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are not at a lower price, then the system can test whether the original query was for a low cost fare and return a bias towards making the seat not available if the query was for a low fare.

(original) 14. The system of claim 11 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those being offered by the user of the system, the system returns a bias towards making the seat available.

(original) 15. The system of claim 11 wherein if the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those being offered by the user of the system, the system determines whether the query was for a high cost fare, and returns a bias towards making the seat available if for a high cost fare.

(Currently Amended) 16. The system of claim 1 wherein the ~~messages that are~~ decision returned changes the availability message from the availability system.

(Previously Amended) 17. A method executed on a computer system of predicting relative, competitive availability of seating on an airline flight comprises:

receiving by the computer system a request for availability of seating on an airline flight and executing in the computer system an algorithm to predict the seating availability on a competitive flight;

receiving by the computer system an actual availability response for a flight; and
comparing the predicted answer from the availability predictor and the potential answer from the availability system to establish a decision with respect to actual availability.

(original) 18. The method of claim 17 wherein comparing produces a decision that is a bias that determines whether the potential answer should be modified based upon the relative competitive position of the competitor represented by the availability predictor.

(original) 19. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

modifying the actual availability answer in accordance with the bias.

(Previously Amended) 20. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

determining whether the competitor's available booking codes are at a lower price than those which the availability system indicates the user of the system can offer.